the period 20.8.1993 to 30.4.1995 and 1.5.1995 to 31.7.1997 respectively, while performing their duties in encounter with or in an incident involving armed hostiles, extremists, terrorists or other anti-social elements such as dacoits/smugglers and also for those killed in enemy action and border skirmishes. Consequent on the implementation of the recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission, the ex-gratia amount was raised to Rs. 5 lakhs in cases of death occurring due to accidents in the course of performance of duties and in cases of death occurring in the course of performance of duty attributable to acts of violence by terrorists, anti-social elements etc., and Rs. 7.5 lakhs in case of death occurring during enemy action in international war or border skirmishes and action against militants, extremists etc. Further, an amendment was made in August, 1999, in the wake of the Kargil conflict, to provide for ex-gratia of Rs. 10 lakhs for death occurring during enemy action in international war or war like engagements and Rs. 7.5 lakhs for death during (i) border skirmishes and (ii) action against militants, terrorists, extremists etc. The Kargil conflict has been treated as war-like engagement and ex-gratia of Rs. 10 lakhs has been granted to the next of kin of those killed in the said operation.

Apart from the above, the following assistance has been provided from the National Defence Fund:— Rs. 5 lakhs for dwelling unit; Rs. 1 lakh per child for education upto two children per family; Rs. 1.2 lakhs for needy parents who were dependent on the deceased soldiers.

In the matter of payment of ex-gratia lump sum compensation a distinction has been made between casualties in war/war-like engagements and those arising out of border skirmishes and action against militants, terrorists, extremists etc., because of the different levels of risk as well as the intensity of action involved in each case.

Prior to August, 1993, there was no ex-gratia payment.

As per extant instructions no distinction is made in payment of terminal benefits to the next of kin of Defence Service personnel killed in the earlier wars/counter insurgency operations/action against militants/terrorists/extremists etc., and in the recent Kargil conflict. The same principle is being followed for grant of Liberalised Family pension to the families of the deceased service personnel, Death Gratuity and Family Gratuity as admissible from time to time.

Requirement for better equipments at Borders

2162. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a serious requirement of better equipments for our armed forces at important borders particularly in North-East Frontier;

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken in this regard; and

(c) what are Government's plans for the present and future?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Our Armed Forces are provided with state-of-the-art equipment required to tackle the proxy war situation and prevent infiltration/exfiltration of mercenaries and militants in the border areas including the North-East. The requirements of our Armed Forces are reviewed on a continuing basis for induction of modernised weapons and weapon systems and keeping in view threat perceptions and the prevailing strategic/security environment as also emerging technologies. As part of the modernisation process and in order to absorb state-of-the-art technology and ensure effective utilisation of equipment, Armed Forces personnel are also provided regular training. The modernisation plans also envisage restructuring of the existing organisation and procedural aspects to ensure that the human, material and financial resources available for the defence of the country are optimally utilised.

Accommodation and transport allowance to CSD Manager

2163. SHRI P. SOUNDARARAJAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the manager of the unit canteen of CSD at Air Force Station, New Delhi has been provided Government accommodation meant for serving personnel in violation of rules;

(b) whether it is also a fact that he has been drawing transport allowance though the distance between office and the residence is less than one Km.; and

(c) what action Government propose to take against the officials responsible for that flagrant violation of rules?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Allotment of accommodation to the manager of the Unit Run Canteen (URC) of CSD canteen at Air Force Station, Race Course, New Delhi has been made by the competent authority under his discretionary powers, as is permissible for key personnel on administrative considerations.

(b) He is drawing transport allowance as admissible under the rules.

(c) Does not arise.

High State of Defence Preparedness

2164. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether at the annual combined commanders conference on 24th November, 1999, the Prime Minister expressed the apprehension that the military coup in Pakistan had increased the possibility of an escalation in proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken to ensure a high state of defence preparedness, to thwart any threat to India's security; and